

AUTOWEEK®

JULY 20, 2015

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Spinning
BMW's in
South Africa

Can **Ken Block**
bring young fans
to GRC?

Alexander
Rossi hangs
on to F1 dream

DRIVES:
2015 HONDA
CIVIC TYPE R
& THE 2016
MAZDA MX-5

Generation Shift

A look at the bright future of car culture from those who will define it



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Inside this issue

AUTOWEEK

JULY 20, 2015



START

TRIPLE TALES

News from Alfa Romeo, Aston Martin and LeMay
BY GREG KACHADURIAN

08 MOVER & SHAKER

CARLIFE

AWESOME ACURA

Dream becomes reality with a 2001 NSX

BY VIVAN SHAH

FEATURES

SPIN CITY

South Africa has a motorsport of its own

BY KARL KEMP

RALLY-READY

Enjoy sleeping? Rally might not be for you

BY RAPHAEL ORLOVE

DRIVES

HOT HONDA

Civic Type R Euro-Spec packed with turbo action

BY GRAHAM KOZAK

OLD-SCHOOL FUN

New Mazda MX-5, same winning sports-car formula

BY FELIX TANG

COMPETITION

BLOCK BOOSTER

Stuntman Ken Block gives an energy boost to Red Bull Global Rallycross

BY ALANIS KING

GRC ROOKIES

Chip Ganassi Racing operation learning the ropes

BY ALANIS KING

ALL IN THE FAMILY

Racing roots run deep in his family tree, but Todd Gilliland strives to branch out for himself

BY ANDY MARQUIS

FUTURE STARS

Toyota strives to keep young drivers in the fold

BY MATT WEAVER

READY & WAITING

Alexander Rossi set to take on Formula One

BY JOEY BARNES

MILES' VISION

Checking in with IndyCar leader Mark Miles

BY JOEY BARNES

53 RACING ON TV

DEPTS/COLUMNS

STEVEN J. EWING

A look back on a decade spent writing about cars

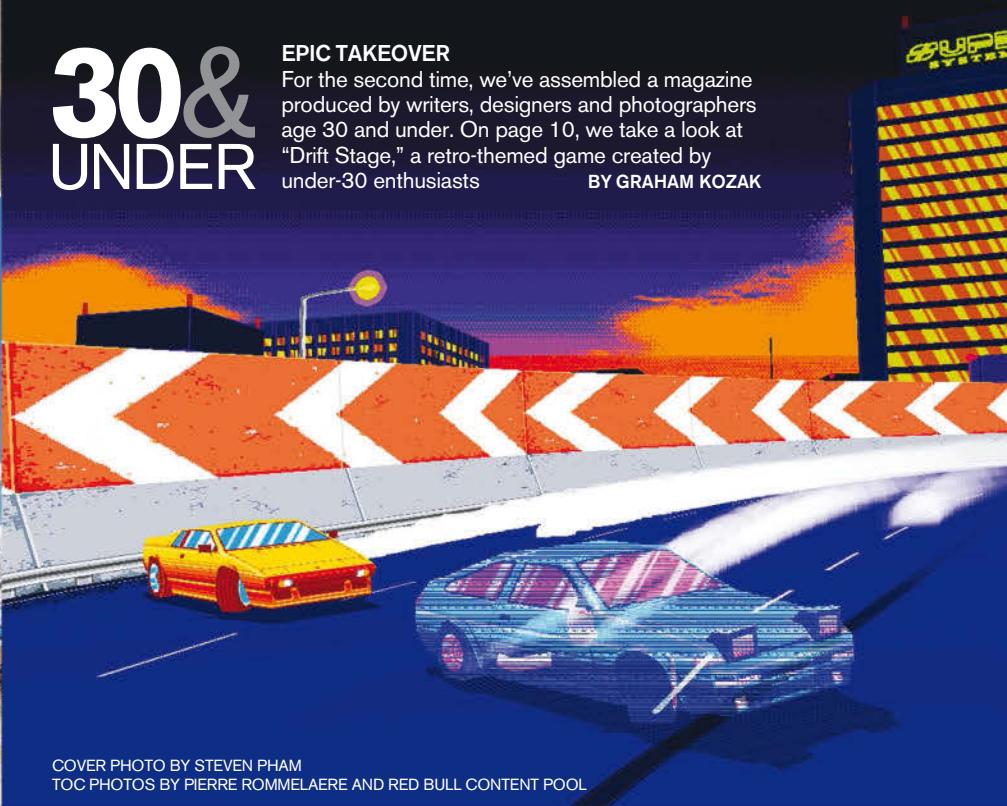
BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE ...

30 & UNDER

EPIC TAKEOVER

For the second time, we've assembled a magazine produced by writers, designers and photographers age 30 and under. On page 10, we take a look at "Drift Stage," a retro-themed game created by under-30 enthusiasts

BY GRAHAM KOZAK



COVER PHOTO BY STEVEN PHAM

TOC PHOTOS BY PIERRE ROMMELAERE AND RED BULL CONTENT POOL



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START



FASTEAST COMES FIRST

■ ALFA ROMEO'S bid for global sports-sedan dominance is the 2016 Giulia, and the company is kicking things off properly by showing the fastest model first.

What you see here is the 2016 Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio, the top-of-the-line Giulia that has all the practicality of a four-door but a punch that puts it in line with the very best performance cars.

It features a very distinctive Italian design, great power with the help of Ferrari engineers, a perfect 50/50 weight distribution and a power-to-weight ratio of about 6.5 pounds per horse.

At its heart is a twin-turbocharged, all-aluminum V6, which produces 510 hp. The Quadrifoglio at least will

be rear-wheel drive and come with a manual—no word on other transmission options yet; 0-62 mph takes just 3.9 seconds.

Helping tame that power is a double-wishbone front and multilink rear suspension. Alfa engineers also used carbon fiber on the hood, roof and seats to keep things light, with aluminum filling in where carbon fiber can't. Expect a curb weight in the 3,300-pound range.

Information on a launch date, pricing and what the lesser models will be like is not yet available.

The Giulia is supposed to help Alfa Romeo expand in markets like the United States, so expect it to be competitive with additional smaller gas- and diesel-engine offerings.

ASTON'S CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

■ For the DB9 GT, Aston Martin's 6.0-liter V12 has been significantly reworked to deliver 540 hp and 457 lb-ft of torque. The all-alloy, quad overhead cam and front mid-mounted V12 is paired with a Touchtronic II six-speed automatic transmission that helps bring the car to 60 mph from rest in 4.4 seconds and on to a top speed of 183 mph. Other changes come in the form of the new AMi II touch-

screen infotainment system, which offers more user-friendliness and better hands-free controls, among many other improvements.

Styling-wise, the DB9 GT is distinguished by a new black-painted splitter and diffuser, revised headlight and taillight treatments and 10-spoke, 20-inch alloy wheels. But let's be real here: The DB9 doesn't need much more than that to look good.



LEMAY—AMERICA'S CAR MUSEUM ANNOUNCES HAGERTY PROGRAM

■ LeMay—America's Car Museum and Hagerty are launching a new program to help train students between the ages of 18 and 25 in the art of automotive restoration and preservation.

Through the Hagerty Education Program, they'll fund classes, scholarships, paid internships and apprenticeships that will give students the hands-on, career-based training necessary to be the heroes we all need.

They've already awarded more than \$2.5 million since 2005. Check out hagertyeducation-program.org

Editor's Note: Greg Kachadurian, 24, compiled this page. He works in IT and is a lover of all things automotive. He enjoys 93 octane and driving in the rain. He writes about cars both new and old at hooniverse.com.



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AUGUST 21 - 23	VIRGINIA INTERNATIONAL RACEWAY	DANVILLE, VA
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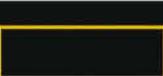


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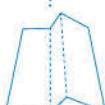


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Honda reminds you to properly secure items in the cargo area.
HR-V EX-L Navi model shown. ©2015 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

HONDA

MOVERS & SHAKERS

FOCUS ON FUN

RYO MUKUMOTO HAS ONE SIMPLE GUIDING PRINCIPLE IN CAR DESIGN

BY MICHAEL GAKURAN

IF THERE'S ONE word central to the Honda S660 roadster and the vision of the bright, young engineer Ryo Mukumoto, it would be "fun." Indeed, as I chat with him on a late June morning in rainy Tokyo, I'm struggling to find a more adventurous synonym to convey his passion for cars and the force behind his impact on the automotive industry in Japan.

Turning 27 this year, Mukumoto already has quite a story to his name. Beating many other applicants in a Honda design competition with his idea for the S660 roadster, he became the

company's youngest-ever project leader at just 22 years of age. Most tend to be in their 40s before becoming a project leader; his breakthrough at Honda was unprecedented.

His vision for the S660 is simple—a really small, energetic sports car that embodies the core of what makes driving enjoyable, targeted at both young people and veteran drivers alike. "I designed the S660 for the kei category in Japan so the car could have just enough power while still remaining small, and importantly it means the upkeep and tax are also kept very low," he explains.

Mukumoto's first car, the Honda S2000, helped direct

focus on the fun. "It was almost as if the car was driving me," he jokes. "The car was a little too big and the stick a little too high for my skill level. For our generation, features like the speed of the car and the stick height are not particularly important." Aspects of everyday life also inspired him. "In sports, for example, I like batting(-cage) centers. It's not about winning or losing, but really just enjoying the whole experience."

Honda's company culture played a big role in the car's development. "Everyone here really loves cars. We work together as one to bring the unthinkable to life," Mukumoto says. Deeply ingrained in this culture is the concept of *waigaya*—lively debate among employees, regardless of their position, age or experience.

Isn't it a little awkward debating with veteran engineers? "Not at all," Mukumoto says.

"Of course, paying attention to age and position is important, but young people are able to produce wild, crazy ideas that veterans might not, and we can build on the veterans' experience. This is one of the interesting results of *waigaya*."

Despite his success, it seems as though Mukumoto will have a bit of a wait ahead of him before he can take his creation cruising on the winding mountain roads of Japan.

"My delivery date is still undecided," he says, with a bitter laugh. The waiting list for future S660 drivers stretches through to next year. ☺

Editor's Note: Michael Gakuran, 29, lives and works in Tokyo. He enjoys driving around the countryside exploring haikyo ruins and writing up the thrilling tales of adventure on his website, [Gakuranman\(gakuran.com\)](http://Gakuranman(gakuran.com).).



STARTING GRID ▶ By Steven J. Ewing



Smartphone insta-coverage at reveals is all part of the new norm in the industry.

AUTOBLOG

A DECADE AND COUNTING

I'LL BE 30 ON FEB. 26, 2016. The next day, I'll celebrate 10 years of full-time employment in automotive media. Yes, when I check off another decade, I'll have spent one-third of my life as a professional "guy who writes about cars."

My journey truly started in the late 1990s, when my mother was hired at Automobile magazine. As a young car enthusiast, I jumped at every opportunity to go to work with her. I went for rides in test cars, thumbed through old issues of the mag and listened to the late David E. Davis Jr. tell stories about what happens when your race car flips over and your face gets ripped off. This was a firm handshake, welcoming me to an industry I officially joined in 2006 as a production assistant at Winding Road. Now, I'm now the managing editor at Autoblog, one of the world's largest automotive pubs.

With my 10-year anniversary near, I've spent a lot of time reflecting on the industry. The automotive space is advancing at a truly remarkable pace. Turbochargers are everywhere. We plug our cars in at home. Everything is wireless, handsfree. You can swipe and gesture and yell at your car's dash-

board, and the technology inside will not only make reservations at your favorite Italian restaurant, it'll tell you what traffic's like on the way. Ten years ago, I was still playing CDs via a cassette adapter for my Sony Discman.

When I started writing about cars, 500 hp was reserved exclusively for exotics. Now you can buy a Dodge Charger with 707. Back then, cars had five-speed transmissions and struggled to get 30 mpg. Now, we've got cars with nine gears, and 40 mpg is quickly becoming the new standard. Can you

imagine explaining a Tesla Model S to yourself from 10 years ago?

As a writer and editor, change hasn't so much been about innovation; rather, keeping up with how readers obtain and share info. Most importantly, you have to be willing to adapt. An exclusive cover story is only as big as its reach across social channels.

With each passing year, it gets better and

better for car enthusiasts. Thanks to the Internet, there is an outlet for every last niche of the automotive space. And when we expand beyond vehicles themselves and look out into the world of transportation tech, there's truly something for everyone in our modern-day car culture.

Here's to the next 10 years.

—steven.ewing@autoblog.com

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30 & UNDER

To follow up on last year's "Eternal Combustion" issue, we've gone even farther afield—and we're thrilled to bring you stories taken from the woods of Pennsylvania to the streets of South Africa (and seemingly everywhere in between). Once again, the theme that binds all these stories together is the fact that none of their authors are over the age of 30.

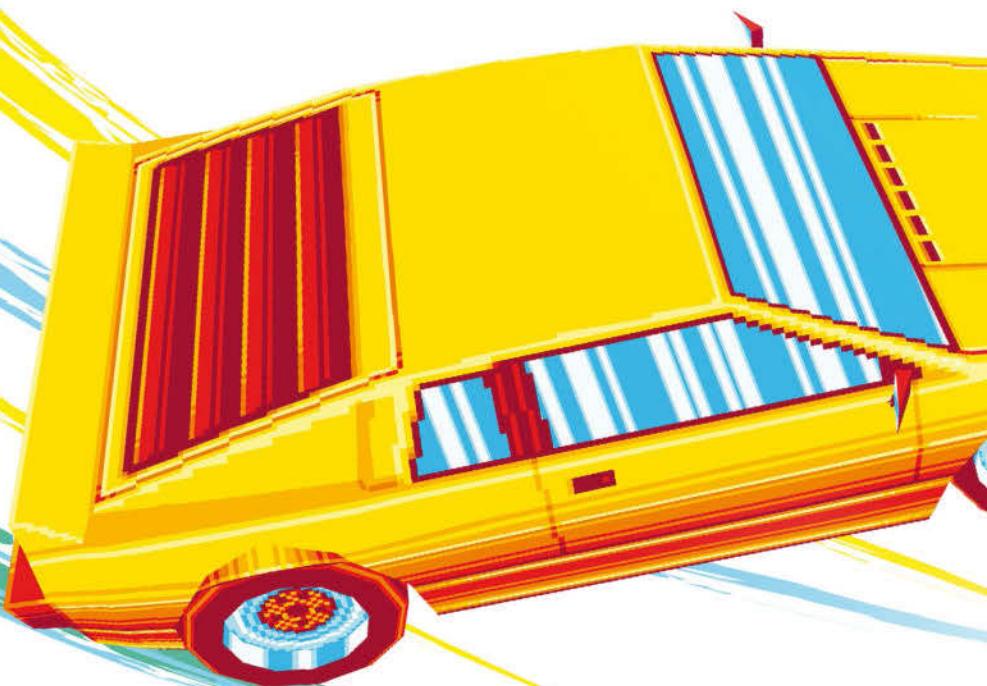
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CARLIFE

SIDEWAYS TO THE FUTURE

A MODERN TAKE ON
NOSTALGIC GAMEPLAY MAKES
'DRIFT STAGE' A WINNER

BY GRAHAM KOZAK





YOU'RE SCREAMING DOWN a midnight skyway in a bright yellow, mid-engine wedge. Barreling into a corner flat-out, you rotate the car, get on the gas at just the right moment and initiate a righteous, never-ending drift. Synth guitar blasts through your speakers as digital tires turn to pixelated smoke.

This is "Drift Stage," a still-in-development computer game that's fully modern under its low-resolution neon skin. It's an earnest tribute to vintage games that's so pitch-perfect you'll forget, for a moment, that it's 2015 and you're sitting in front of your desktop, not chucking quarters into a machine in a dingy arcade. Not that the game's creators, three 20-somethings scattered across the U.S., are old enough to have experienced the golden age of arcades.

"Drift Stage"—in its creators' words, a game about the 1980s in the style of the early 1990s—began where a love of cars intersected an interest in video-game design. Pennsylvania-based Charles Blanchard, 23, is responsible for its distinctive look. "'80s racing games were really primitive," he says. "[Nintendo's 1987 title 'Rad Racer'] had a Ferrari 328 in it, but it was a Ferrari 328 by definition only—a little, low-res graphic. I wanted to do these cars justice, to give that whole era the credit it deserves instead of blocky Atari graphics."

Chase Petit, a Florida-based 29-year-old, brings the programming muscle; Californian Hugh Myrone, 24, ties it all together with a retrowave soundtrack.

The team is targeting a December 2015 release date for the game. But a playable demo, available for free online, gives a taste of what's to come.

Even in this early form, it's clear that Blanchard, Petit and Myrone have hit on a perfect combination of nostalgia and addictive gameplay—one that stands in contrast to today's hyper-realistic blockbuster driving titles. "A lot of these new games are almost stressful to play," Blanchard says of

"Gran Turismo," "Forza" and other highly involved titles. "Since they're simulators, you've got to focus; you've got to be on your racing line; you've got to hit the apex at the right times; you've got to manage your tire wear and temperature."



The low-res look isn't a gimmick—the graphics are an integral part of the game's throwback appeal. In "Drift Stage," you'll spend as much time as possible getting sideways, burning virtual rubber while sliding around corners to the sound of a synth-guitar soundtrack.

That's not the point of "Drift Stage," Petit explains. "We're trying to make a throwback to arcade racers that were just about fun cars going fast—not having to build a cockpit in your living room, having this obsessive level of simulation that a lot of games strive for these days."

To avoid violating copyright, none of the vehicles in "Drift Stage" wear recognizable badges. But they're supremely evocative of the cars of the era: There's the Bulldog, a simplified, lightness-added British wedge. The exotic Stalloni could easily wear a Prancing Horse. The GT Turbo comes with JDM-spec fender-mounted mirrors and two-tone bodywork. There are more in the garage, and they're hardly the obvious choices; we haven't spotted an F40 stand-in or a Countach yet.

That's by design. The game is a chance to show off "cars that never really got the limelight they deserved," says Blanchard. "The ones that weren't the poster cars." But they're all cars that he loves, that he'd like to own—never mind that collectors have started sending their prices skyward.

Blanchard's co-creators have likewise embraced the total creativity afforded by

game creation. "I've always been interested in guitar-based, goofy music," Myrone says of the synth soundtrack. "When I started playing guitar, my older brother gave me the first Van Halen album and I was like, 'Whoa, this is cool. I want to make that kind of noise.' This project has been a really good way for me to explore that stuff."

Petit, for his part, says working on "Drift Stage" is way better than the "boring, government contract-type" jobs that had been paying the bills previously.

The guys are passionate about the product and excited to bring their vision to the public. From what we've seen so far, they've nailed it. Their balance of killer aesthetics and low-stress gameplay makes "Drift Stage" a sort of self-contained universe full of twisting superhighways and retro-cool cars. It's the kind of place we'd like to spend some time.

Don't take yourself too seriously—and remember to get sideways as soon as possible—and we think you'll like hanging out in the world of "Drift Stage," too. ☺

To download and play the "Drift Stage" demo, visit driftstagegame.com



OWNERSHIP ▶ 2001 ACURA NSX

MY ETERNAL SPORTSMIND

FROM DREAM TO OBSESSION TO A PERFECT NSX

STORY AND PHOTOS BY VIVAN SHAH

I FIRST SAW AN ACURA NSX in 1991, shortly after the car's release. My elementary-school principal drove one. Sometimes during recess, I'd take a detour through the staff parking

lot, hoping to see it, although she did not bring it to school often.

Years later, a buddy of mine got "Gran Turismo," and in all my time playing versions of that video game, I only drove the NSX. Clearly, something about the car had a hold on me. I got my first car in my

junior year of college—a Civic Si. Nothing fancy, but the closest thing to an NSX that was within my reach at the time.

In early 2012, my budget opened up enough for me to start looking. I became an expert on NSX maintenance. I memorized the "Changes by Year" page on the NSX Prime site and decided on a 2001—the last year of the classic pop-up lights, but with all the upgraded mechanical bits. I checked nsxprime.com, Autotrader, cars.com, eBay and Craigslist multiple times every day. I came close a few times and even flew out to see a car, but a small concern about a repair and a stiff aftermarket clutch made me reconsider.

Then last summer, I came across an '01



Berlina black NSX in Arkansas. The Carfax was clean, pictures looked amazing and the car had no mods other than a cat-back exhaust.

I had a good feeling about this one and bought a one-way ticket to Fayetteville. When I got to the owner's house and saw it for the first time, my jaw dropped. Then we went for a test drive—only the second time I had ever driven an NSX. No rattles, no weird sounds from the engine, and it drove as well in real life as it did in my dreams. I checked all the body panels for their VIN tags and, as an extra precaution, checked every panel with a paint-depth meter. We finished the paperwork and I set off back to Pittsburgh with a signed title, a stack of service records and a massive grin.

The NSX is an excellent highway car. The low center of gravity means the engineers could use softer springs without excessive body roll, and the car is unaffected by grooves in the road or cross-winds. I also now understand why mid-rear is such a desirable layout: The NSX just digs in and rotates right around your seating position. I've read about some twitchiness at the limit, but those limits



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Along my 900-mile drive home, I ran across several "caravans" of sports cars—a bunch of Porsches, several groups of Corvettes and some older BMWs. It was only a couple miles away from home that I ran into a fellow NSX Prime member's black NSX, on its way back from a local meet. I can't think of a better accidental welcome back to Pittsburgh. Although the NSX is far less common than many other sports cars, the owners are so passionate

about their cars, and so unafraid to drive them, that we often outnumber Ferraris and Porsches at events.

Honda left a little Easter egg in each NSX. Deep inside the dash, printed on a label on the climate-control unit, is the mysterious phrase "An Eternal Sports-mind For You." Some say that something was lost in translation, but I think the phrase captures NSX ownership perfectly. I certainly intend to keep mine forever. ☺

Editor's Note: Vivan Shah is a software engineer from Pittsburgh. When he can resist the NSX, he daily drives a Civic Si or, in dire situations, his wife's Subaru Legacy.

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RUNNING IN CIRCLES

SOUTH AFRICANS, WITH HELP FROM VINTAGE BMWs, SPIN THEIR OWN SPORT

STORY BY KARL KEMP | PHOTOS BY PIERRE ROMMELAERE

It's June 16 in Soweto, a massive township outside Johannesburg, South Africa. The date is the annual commemoration of the notorious 1976 student uprising against the Apartheid regime's education policies, which left more than 100 dead at the hands of the police. We're in Dobsonville, a Soweto suburb, at an intersection filled with upwards of 2,000 Sowetans in various states of inebriation and celebration. Traffic pushes through where it can, until word gets out about the goings-on, and it slows to a trickle.

The winter sun is setting over the traffic lights that wink green-orange-red vainly, as the first *gusheshe* (slang for the BMW E30) starts spinning in the small circle-gap left open by the crowd. Flashes of sparks from its rims coruscate in the rapidly darkening air. The *gusheshe* spins and twists and roars in figure-eight patterns across the tarmac, throwing powerslides, cutting swathes, scattering bushels of rubber. Every second or third slide, the tail swings toward the spectators, who dodge with practiced ease. Whenever there's a long enough lull in movement, they rush forward, piling onto the car, trying to touch the driver, until he takes off again. Every now and then, the passenger door opens and its occupant clammers out, hanging backwards with his head a few inches off the ground, or jumps through the window and runs along the side keeping hold of the roaring car. There are a few marshals in plainclothes with *sjamboks* (bullwhips), but at a certain point the crowd becomes uncontrollable—the



atmosphere of youth and revolt, the heady scent of June 16, has taken over.

It's basically a huge street party, billed as "Mphephetho." During breaks in the spinning, the punters break-dance or groove to the kwaito house music burbling from a house on the corner. Two *shebeens* (unlicensed liquor traders) operate down the road, keeping the masses supplied. The event is organized via social media by a spinning crew called Sakh Spirit. By 19:00, when we're plunged into a frosty winter's eve, it is absolutely packed. Those in front push back to avoid a spinning *gusheshe*, and those at the back push forward to see.

A gunshot rings out into the night—we gaspingly realize it is only a tire bursting. The crowd goes even wilder; popping tires is part of the game. Once you're spinning on a rim, you're done; you've proved yourself for the night. The spinners drive for one to five minutes, the longest even 20, depending on what

their car can handle.

It's known simply as "spinning." It's not drifting—spinners hit no more than 35 mph, in most cases, and there is no track or competition other than that for bragging rights. At this level, on the streets where it is illegal, where it was birthed, it is primal, pure and bears many of the hallmarks of its '80s crime-tainted origins: a no-holds-barred celebration at the cusp between life and death, where *tsot-sis* (gangsters) would steal cars and spin them at fallen comrades' funerals.

The preferred models in the early days were 5- and 7-series BMWs. Today, the most popular is the E30, generally fitted with a bigger engine. While most rear-drive cars can be spun, the *gusheshe* (named for the sound its revving engine makes) has the right balance and image. An E30 might be cheap secondhand (R20,000, or roughly \$1,640), but many spinners will spend more than half that again to repair engines due to the original's scarcity.

Though the same kind of reckless exhibitionism can be found in many places around southern Africa, its origins are most probably Soweto. Every second spinner will tell you that they were the first to jump from the car while it was still moving, but there's no real certainty. What is for sure is how adept people have

become at it—videos are all over the Web.

And with its proliferation came celebrity status—names like Jeff James, Magesh Ndaba and Ngamshi hold great public sway in Soweto. Sakh Spirit had specifically excluded celebrity spinners in order to attract those who wish to attend "for the love of the sport." It's an indication of the growing gulf between the purists and the progressives, a gulf that has come to define the transitional nature of the sport in its difficult teething years from street to stadium.

It's been about seven years since the push for legitimacy and its subsequent debate was sparked. Pule Earm is a filmmaker and spinning promoter who describes himself as the link between spinners and the broader public. For Earm, there has to be a way to maintain the adrenal rush, the ridiculous flouting of survival instincts, yet keep spectators safe and erase any criminal implications. To this end, he's founded Soweto Drift, an

association of spinners dedicated to furthering the activity as a legitimate sport.

Many of the spinners we meet at the Dobsonville event admit, to us at least, that they'd rather spin in a safe environment. But to spin safely, they need the facilities. To gain the facilities, they need funding, certification and permission.

Opposite: Unsanctioned spinning thrills in the streets of Soweto, its likely birthplace. Below: Two spinning enthusiasts work beneath an old BMW 5-series that has suffered the sport's trials.



FEATURE



Global executive power lies with the FIA, which recognizes only one governing body in most countries, South Africa's being Motorsport SA. MSA has a stringent checklist of safety precautions that must be met for licensing to be granted; Earm was the first to organize such an event in Soweto in 2010, one where MSA officials were present. He was met with hostility by the spinning old guard, who came to the event "guns blazing" in anger at the upstart who sought to "exploit" the sport.

Evidence of progression away from its gangster roots is found at places like

Wheelz N Smoke in Alberton, 10 minutes away from Soweto. Here there are stands, barriers, marshals, even paramedics. Monde Hashe, a land surveyor by profession, is the owner. He pays the spinners and holds them to strict standards in their private lives with regards to public spinning. Hashe is in favor of legalizing the sport but is not as enthusiastic as Earm. It feels like he's afraid of that ultimate cliché: selling out. Hashe is working with MSA, for now, because he has no other choice.

Thursday nights at Wheelz N Smoke sees an average of 300 to 500 people

As mainstream venues like Wheelz N Smoke emerge, spinning struggles to maintain the identity it carved out on the streets of South Africa.

through the door, but renting the venue to host an event will cost the equivalent of about \$2,900—a steep price when you still have to pay the spinners, the officials and the overhead. This is another reason why spinning is still rife in suburban streets, and the reason Sakhi Spirit gave for their *toyi-toyi* (protest) in Dobsonville: There aren't sufficient facilities. Wheelz N Smoke is one of very few up to scratch. But why drive to Alberton when the spinning takes place right in front of your house in Soweto?

Earm has his own plans for opening a venue in Soweto soon, but what's also apparent is that illegal spinning won't die out completely. Yet with the push for legitimization gaining ground, it's hard to see the future of the old guard. What's happening at Wheelz N Smoke feels like both an end and a beginning.

A young man comes flying past, his tongue lashing at the cold air, all but his right arm hanging outside a powersliding BMW. He's probably too young to remember why his forebears did this in the first place. But in his eyes remains the intrinsic spark that ignited the *tsotsits* of yore, the spark that drives us to dance with death when the world has lost meaning. In whichever form it eventually takes, spinning is here to stay—and to stay as alluringly dangerous as ever. ♣

Editor's Note: Karl Kemp is a 23-year-old law student and freelance journalist based in Stellenbosch, South Africa. Reach him on Twitter @karlkemp8



UNDER THE GUN

WHAT IT ACTUALLY TAKES TO RUN A RALLY

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RAPHAEL ORLOVE



It's nine o'clock the night before Susquehannock Trail Performance Rally starts its first stage miles.

I'm co-driving for Bill Petrow in his Nissan 240SX, a drift/rally/hillclimb Swiss army knife of a car ("Look Ma, No Hands," Nov. 10, 2014).

Naturally, the car is not here. Neither is Petrow. I just got a call that they're on the side of the road in god-knows-where-Pennsylvania with one trailer hooked up to a church van, two rally cars and one blown motor. Here's how it all happened.

FEATURE

Petrow isn't just fielding the 240. His Union City, N.J., shop, Broken Motor-sports, has actually had its hands on an unbelievable one-fifth of the entire 70-car entry list for the event, held June 5-6. Broken has caged, tuned, modified and prepped everything from a BMW M3 to a 2006 Mustang GT and nearly a dozen Subarus in between.

Most importantly at the moment, they're also running a 2000 Subaru Impreza 2.5RS as a rally rental to Aakash and Uttara Desai, two siblings who grew up marshaling desert rallies in Dubai with their dad. The 2.5RS was, a few weeks ago, a bone-stock daily driver Petrow used to get around town.

I have a distinct memory of Petrow casually mentioning he'd decided to build up this old Subaru into a rally rental only so that he'd have an impetus to get it fixed and operable rather than gathering dust in the back of his shop. I also remember why, in fact, this car had been sitting so forlornly: It was this exact 2.5RS that Petrow himself drove off the road at STPR last year while supporting another team. He slid it into a ravine. If he hadn't steered into the skid and gotten back on the gas, he told me, he would have rolled.

So it sort of made sense that the car would come back to life for STPR a year later. Only Petrow didn't spend a year getting the car back in shape.



He gave himself 23 days.

It was a crazy plan, but at its start, things seemed like they were all coming together. He and his employees got the car stripped in half a day, down to the bare metal a day later.

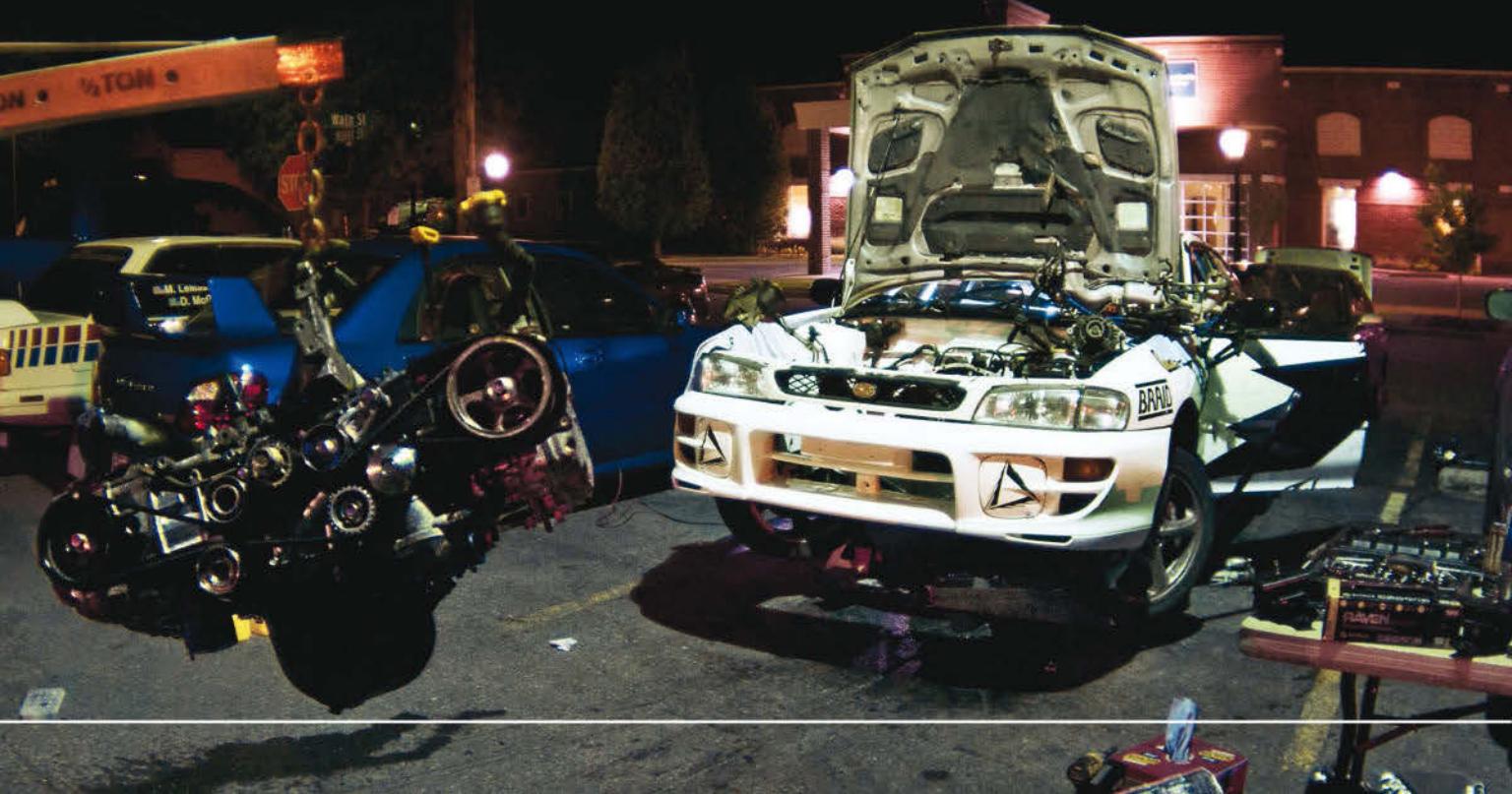
The full cage was done in less than two weeks, and the car was sent and returned from the paint shop a few days later.

That meant the car was just a rolling hulk of metal seven days before it was supposed to be tearing ass down the

forest roads of Pennsylvania.

And this is when the nights of a few hours of sleep started. Engine going in, wiring going in, suspension going in. My sense of time started to get a little hazy as nights bled into mornings. Was it two days ago when they put all the doors and body panels on?

I watched the final assembly, as problems went from large (getting the engine to fire up) to small (getting a new rear bumper on the car so they could mount quick-release clips for the trunk, which then got bent and needed to be pried into place by hand because there were no





auto parts stores open since it happened to be what-the-eff hour in the goddamn morning).

Once this little Subaru could move under its own power, Petrow wasted no time in trailering it down to south Jersey to get a full vinyl-wrap livery on it. I was driving myself to the small town of Wellsboro, Pa., the home of STPR, when I got a text showing the car fully wrapped. It looked awesome. Also, it looked like it was missing a few things like, I don't know, headlights.

I had left for the rally early because I was co-driving in the event. I needed to get there to run recon and prep our stage notes. Not that I would have totally minded Petrow getting confused and stuffing his car into a tree in the first 40 yards of the rally. It would have given me a chance to sleep.

As I'm waiting there, at a rally without a driver, I get word that the motor blew in the rally-rental Subaru—and that Petrow and the Broken crew are driving up to swap the engine in the hotel parking lot. It would go as smoothly as a parking-lot engine swap could possibly go.

Deadlines are weird like that. You can have a project lying around for days, weeks, months, and then something happens that stirs you to throw everything you have into it.

Working and driving through the night, catching sleep as the sun is com-

Opposite: A last-minute engine swap kept the Subaru 2.5RS in the game; it ran perfectly the next day. Above: Faulty intercom? Turbo failure? Engine fire? None of it could keep the 240SX down.

got their first finish.

For Petrow and me in the 240? Well, our intercom didn't work on the first stage, then the engine caught on fire, then the turbo stopped boosting, then the power brakes stopped working, then we rolled the car fully through the air, landed on the wheels, drove off and then ran out of gas.

Then we kept going and set two (unofficial) stage records for our class. We blew away the previous fastest times on the fastest stages of the rally, bumping off the rev limiter in fifth gear at 100 mph with trees inches from the road.

And that's rally. It is, largely, a self-imposed sleep-deprivation challenge for people who like busting their knuckles at four in the morning and pissing in the woods. But it has its moments. ☺

Editor's Note: Raphael Orlove is 25. He hasn't crashed every single car he's ever driven, it just feels that way. Find more of his writing at jalopnik.com

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2015 HONDA CIVIC TYPE R EURO-SPEC

ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

WE COULD GET USED TO THE TURBO SIDE OF HONDA

BY GRAHAM KOZAK

WITH APOLOGIES TO THE Civic Si, it's been ages since Honda built a car about which American devotees could get excited. Sure, Honda sells a street-legal MotoGP bike—great if you have a spare \$184K and supreme faith in your riding abilities—but the S2000 left awhile ago and it's been eons since we had the Acura Integra Type R.

Now there's hope: Honda has promised to bring the Civic Type R, a car fellow gearheads in Europe and Japan have enjoyed for years, to the U.S. This 2015 Honda Civic Type R five-door, however, is

not bound for the States. The one coming is based on the 2016 Civic arriving later this year (we don't expect the Type R until 2017 or so). But since the Euro-spec car hints at what might be in store, we jumped at the chance to give it a shot in Slovakia.

A casual glance at the spec sheet should make even non-Honda fans take note: This Civic produces 306 hp from the factory—let that sink in—and gets its power from an Ohio-built 2.0-liter turbo four. Yes, Honda has gone turbo, a huge departure for a company famous for its rev-happy naturally aspirated powerplants.

To make up for that radical change, the rest of the Civic Type R is traditional hot

hatch. Unlike the all-wheel-drive Ford Focus RS, the Civic sticks to front-wheel drive (complete with a limited-slip diff). Dual-axis front struts and rigidity-balanced left and right driveshafts work to reduce torque steer; it's down 55 percent compared to a stock Civic, Honda says. The only transmission is a six-speed manual.

Love it or hate it, the Civic Type R's body kit makes the Subaru WRX STI look like a sleeper. Honda claims the front splitter, side skirts, rear diffuser and absurd rear wing are all functional and needed to keep the car grounded at its 167-mph top speed.

Inside, the well-bolstered driver's seat and chunky flat-bottomed steering wheel are part of the nicest Civic interior we've been in, with a dash cleaner than the U.S.-market Civic's.

Honda's glorious naturally aspirated engines don't begin to wake up until around 4,000 rpm; that's part of their character. So if this turbo four is a taste of what's coming, the Honda faithful might need an adjustment period. To start, there's near-immediate torque—295 lb-ft of



ON SALE: Now (Europe only) **BASE PRICE:** \$47,325 (converted from British pounds) **DRIVETRAIN:** 2.0-liter, 306-hp, 295-lb-ft turbocharged I4; FWD, six-speed manual **CURB WEIGHT:** 3,047 lb **0-60 MPH:** 5.7 sec (est) **FUEL ECONOMY (EPA CITY/HWY/COMBINED):** 30/46/39 mpg (European test cycle)

it from just 2,500 rpm. The motor doesn't soar to its predecessors' screaming rpms. Peak output is 6,500, redline a mere 7,000. It's not unpleasant, just different.

The car feels well suited to everyday driving, with the motor's accessible power playing nicely with the crisp short-throw six-speed—torque steer is, as promised, almost nonexistent. Though chassis rigidity is up a reported 18 percent compared to a stock Civic five-door, the ride isn't too harsh for Europe's relatively smooth roads.

Yet the Type R packs more performance potential than an average driver will know what to do with. Punch the R-plus button located just left of the steering wheel, and throttle response is enhanced; power-steering assist is dialed back; the adaptive-damper suspension system gets 30 percent stiffer; stability control is adjusted. And, crucially, the instrument cluster glows red. You're in Battle Mode.

For better or worse, the car is impossible to drive at anything approaching its limit without flagrantly violating traffic laws. So we followed up our road driving

with a session at the Slovakia Ring.

With no agricultural vehicles to watch for, we could focus on the car's handling under pressure: neutral with predictable understeer. Impressive power is enhanced (or blunted, perhaps) by advanced onboard tech. Thanks to systems like Agile Handling Assist, which uses brakes to induce rotation in a corner, you have to do something stupid for this car to bite you.

Yep, this thing has all the markings of a thoroughly modern hot hatch. We figure it's a great car to learn the ropes on—fun for a track-day rookie, tons of dormant performance for the more-experienced driver, as a few punishing, tire-shredding hot laps with a pro at the wheel demonstrated.

Had you asked an American Honda geek what they wanted in a Type R, they'd have described an edgier Civic Si. This is a different beast entirely—it's going to take some getting used to, but it bodes well for the future of Honda performance. The automaker still has a few years to refine the formula before it unleashes the Type R's successor here. It will be worth the wait. ☀



2016 MAZDA MX-5

HELLO, NEW OLD FRIEND

MODERN MIATA IS JOYOUSLY TRADITIONAL

BY FELIX TANG

“TOSSABLE” ISN’T a term commonly associated with the modern automobile, but there’s at least one manufacturer—Mazda—that has been able to capture the spirit of the original lightweight sports car in a package practical enough to use as a daily driver. Its totally redesigned MX-5 swims against the industry’s tides of increasing mass, ultra-efficient dual-clutch/automatic transmissions and astro-

nomical power figures.

And yet ... I had reservations. Raw power figures and 0-60 times aren’t good for much more than headlines, and it’s impossible thus far to quantify how a car feels to drive. Though a combination of low power and low weight worked for the traditional sports cars I’ve owned and enjoyed, I wasn’t entirely convinced that the formula remained relevant today.

Can the MX-5 afford to bring just 155 hp to the table at a time when massive output

is so cheap? We’re not just talking about hypercars: Today’s Corvette Z06 boasts 650 hp, four-cylinder Mustangs churn out 310 hp and even a new V6 Accord that my mom would happily drive delivers 278 hp. Even the Honda S2000 pumped out 240 naturally aspirated hp with the same displacement ... 16 years ago.

Driving off for the first time, you’ll quickly discover that usable power is available from 1,800 rpm. Delivery remains linear up to redline with torque available at nearly all engine speeds. A close-ratio six-speed transmission makes it an absolute pleasure to row through the gears, but the generous powerband means that downshifting is not always necessary when attempting to pass someone while cruising at 2,400 rpm—or exiting canyon corners at a slower-

than-anticipated pace.

Through it all, the sound of the engine is defined by lovely intake noise reminiscent of a Toyota MR2’s 20-valve 4A-GE motor.

Naturally, it helps that Mazda engineers built this new MX-5 to weigh within 150 pounds of the first-generation Miata (to learn how, see “The Real Thing,” March 2, 2015). Despite the low weight, the roadster remains compliant with today’s crash regulations and adds many of the creature comforts that the modern consumer “needs,” like air conditioning, smart-key access and an awkwardly positioned BMW i-Drive-esque infotainment system.

The lightness of the car came across within the first block of driving. Steering is a little light but highly communicative, with a weight/



precision combination that can surprise. Unaccustomed, I found myself having to adjust the steering angle mid-corner because I'd turned in too hard. Still, an abundance of mechanical grip—despite the skinny 205-section tires—inspires confidence.

The Club package-equipped car's optional, softer-than-expected Bilstein suspension keeps everything planted over pavement of varying quality. No fancy electronically adjustable shocks here, just well-tuned damping. Despite the sportiness of the setup, the car soaks up the bumps and un-

avoidable potholes of Los Angeles much better than my daily-driver BMW 535i (with, er, the fancy electronically adjustable shocks).

Exterior aesthetics of the new MX-5, like those of previous Miatas, have always been controversial. A roadster-geek buddy of mine compared this current front end with the face of a catfish. Personally, I like the look of the subtle bulging fenders/quarter panels; it's as if the car is trying to tell everyone that it's more than just a cute little convertible.

A joyous canyon-carving machine, perhaps?

I am still a fan of cars with tremendous acceleration, but having owned a Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG, I'll admit it wasn't often that I was able to use all of the car's 450 hp. The reality is that without access to a racetrack and an abundance of skill, a powerful car's potential goes unused for the majority of its life.

For good reason, the Miata has always been a great representation of what a lightweight sports car should be. It has just enough power, and all of it can be explored and enjoyed often. More than just tossable, the MX-5's newest

incarnation is well suited for those who crave a visceral driving experience—for those who find more pleasure in driving near the limit than in knowing the limit is waiting a ways off. ☺

Editor's Note: Felix Tang, 30, is a motorsports fanatic who has owned and modified cars ranging from Fox-body Mustangs to Toyota AE86 Corollas to BMW M3s. He's crewed for pro Spec Miata, MX-5 Cup and Grand Am Rolex Sports Car GT teams. He currently resides in Los Angeles and works in finance.

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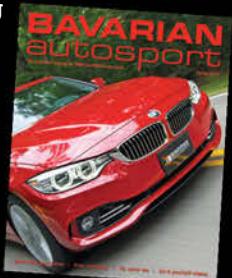
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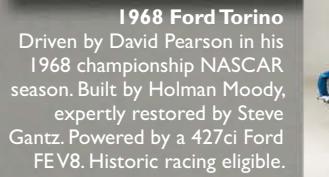
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CROSSOVER APPEAL

KEN BLOCK DELIVERS HIS OWN BRAND OF ENERGY BOOST TO RED BULL GLOBAL RALLYCROSS

BY ALANIS KING

KEN BLOCK KNOWS how to attract attention, and Red Bull Global Rallycross wants to be noticed.

Sounds like a perfect fit.

Having already made millions in the skateboarding and snowboarding business, the 47-year-old DC Shoes founder these days applies his promotional expertise to motorsports. And when it comes to being the face of the Red Bull Global Rallycross series, the key is staying relevant to the sport's young energy-drink-guzzling fans.

"Whatever motorsport that I'm in, I'm trying to do the best to promote it," Block said during a break in the action at a recent event in Daytona Beach, Fla. "I do this stuff because I love it."

Block is also a big fan of winning, both in business and on-track. Through four of 12 scheduled GRC races, Block was first in the

points standings.

GRC's short races and fast-paced television production cater to the depreciating average attention span of youth, and Block's style fits right into this mold. The zebra stripes, the galaxy themes, the social-media presence and Web design—each outward piece of Block's persona seeps into the nearly 5-year-old GRC, enabling the series to reach a wider audience.

"We've been able to [use social media and exposure] and be very successful at it—probably one of the most successful rally and rallycross teams in the world," Block said. "I'm pretty proud of what we've been able to do."

Block's success on the motorsports and business fronts makes him a valuable asset to GRC, says series co-founder and chief operating officer Chip Pankow. He says that the series' top drivers like Block,



Tanner Foust, Brian Deegan and Bucky Lasek all exhibit a key ingredient to the sport's growth by bringing in already existing fan bases.

"This sport is really young," Pankow said, "and one of the ways we've been able to grow so quickly is by having a bunch of great crossover athletes who have come into the sport. When you have big crossover athletes, they also bring crossover fans. And we've tried to build a sport that (when) crossover fans see, they immediately understand and they immediately like."

Participating in rallycross championships, rallies on the world stage and Gymkhana is "a dream come true" in Block's eyes, stemming from an interest that took root at a young age.

"I just wasn't that interested in American motorsports," Block said. "I really enjoyed rally—the way that the cars jumped and slid, were in

snow and deserts of Africa, all these different things—and it's just what interested me kind of most of my life."

Block was bitten by the rally bug in his 30s, and he took his skills all the way to the Rally America National Championship series in 2005. Competing with his own independent team and claim-



ing Rookie of the Year honors, Block edged out factory-backed Travis Pastrana for the fourth-place slot in the standings.

"I just really, thoroughly enjoyed it," Block said. "I had a little bit of natural talent, and I just knew how to work really hard to try and develop it more. Ever since then, I've just pushed really hard every year to try

Top: Ken Block celebrates on the podium after winning the finals at Red Bull Global Rallycross in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

and be the best driver that I can."

Feeling "extremely lucky" to discover his driving talent, the skills of businessman and wheelman became one. Racing against competitors whose only focus is on the track in front of them, Block's endeavors have required the driver to learn to "segment all the different things" he does.

"I enjoy the business side of things and I enjoy the creative side of things," Block said. "I also have a great family with three young kids and an amazing wife. To try and balance all that some days can be quite difficult, but I think we've found some good ways to do it."

"I've had years where I've had too much going on, and it kind of affected the racing. I've learned how to deal with that so I can really set myself up to try and win."

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Ken Block, Sebastian Eriksson and Steve Arpin stacked the podium at Red Bull Global Rallycross in June at Daytona Beach, Fla. Below: Block storms the track at an event in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., in May.

chart-topping Gymkhana videos for nearly 11 years, Block says he's fortunate. Despite a late start to his career, the driver plans to continue behind the wheel as long as physically possible.

"I've had an amazing business career and now I'm having an amazing racing career," Block said. "I wish I had started when I was younger. But

sometimes, life comes at you in unique ways you don't expect, and you just make the most of it."

Those around Block recognize his integral role in the growth of GRC. Fellow competitor Foust, a "Top Gear" host whose fame outside of GRC serves a similar purpose, said the fun, video game-like sport forges a "good connection"



with each of their fan bases.

"His fans, the people who know who he is, are people who like to have fun in cars," Foust said. "I think those fun-loving fans who have a common backbone of being a car enthusiast—as soon as they see a sport like rallycross, they're hooked."

Block doesn't believe rallying is limited to action-sports fans and car enthusiasts like himself.

A member of the self-termed "ADD Generation," the driver said the potential of GRC and its appeal to the modern consumer span the globe.

"I really think that it's set up to potentially be the next big motor sport," Block said. "Not only do I love participating in it, but I love being a part of it and seeing it grow, and seeing the fans enjoy what we do and want to come out and see it more." ☀



RED BULL CONTENT POOL (3)

LEARNING A NEW GAME

CHIP GANASSI RACING LEARNING GLOBAL RALLYCROSS ON THE FLY

■ CLASS IS IN SESSION this year at Chip Ganassi Racing. The classroom is the Red Bull Global Rallycross series, as several members of Ganassi's racing operation learn a new game.

The compact, production-based cars of Global Rallycross. The multi-surface courses. The competition. Even attending a GRC race—it's all a new experience for a majority of the CGR Rallycross team, a mix of internally chosen team members whose experience lies mainly with stock cars and endurance racing.

To bridge the knowledge gap for the mostly NASCAR-based crew, Ganassi tabbed veteran rally engineer Carl Goodman.

"You look around (the garage), and there's not a single person who's not working," said CGR Rallycross driver Steve Arpin. "Everyone's working, and everyone's getting something done. Each guy complements the other guys' weaknesses,

so it works out, honestly."

Arpin—sitting at No. 6 in the series' points standings for the drivers' championship at press time—calls Brian Deegan and Jeff Ward his teammates.

Working with a "never give up, just keep going" ethic derived from years in NASCAR, the group has done well to handle its transition to an unfamiliar car and discipline, according to Goodman.

"They've been in racing for years at a very high, professional level, so there's nothing I'm teaching them in that respect," Goodman said. "At the moment, I know more about the car than they do."

Sharing his wealth of knowledge gained from 10 years as a rally engineer for M-Sport, Goodman says that the group has adapted well.

"The nature of NASCAR—it's the very small details that ultimately make the big difference. And a lot of rallying and rallycross is more in the broad strokes," Goodman said. "The NASCAR guys,

they're well turned out when it comes to detail, preparation and being ready to go."

The NASCAR experience crosses over in more ways than one, as Goodman described the intensity of GRC to be "on par with what the NASCAR guys see on a Friday with practice and qualifying"—generally short stints on-track with a lot of garage activity in between.

"In general, I would say they've been very well prepared," Goodman said.

"(The car does) come back covered in dirt and mud a lot more than they're used to. (But) the work ethic, the experience—everything has translated very well."

"Really, we're learning a lot every race weekend," Goodman said. "They bring all of their race experience, I bring some car experience and we all learn together when it comes to GRC racing." —AK

Editor's Note: Alanis King, 19, is pursuing a Bachelor of Journalism degree at the University of Texas at Austin and hails from Bryan-College Station, Texas. She has covered NASCAR, Red Bull Global Rallycross and Late Model racing. Her work appears at National Speed Sport News and Race22.com



MAKING A NAME FOR HIMSELF

YOUNG TODD GILLILAND IS ON FAST TRACK TO FOLLOW IN DAD'S AND GRANDPA'S FOOTSTEPS

BY ANDY MARQUIS

THIRD-GENERATION RACER

Todd Gilliland is finding the best way to make a name for himself is to win races. Gilliland turned heads May 17 when he became the youngest race winner in the ARCA Racing Series' 62-year history—a series one step from NASCAR.

Gilliland's Toledo (Ohio) Speedway win came just two days after his 15th birthday, and his dad, Sprint Cup driver David Gilliland, was there to watch. It was the younger Gilliland's ARCA debut.

The teen predominantly races Late Models in the Southeast. He hopes to achieve the type of stock-car racing success his father has enjoyed and his grandfather, 1997 NASCAR Winston West Series champion Butch Gilliland, experienced.

Gilliland picked up his first career Late Model win at Southern National Motorsports Park in North Carolina in March. While that win got him some attention, his ARCA triumph driving for Venturini Motorsports really boosted his profile and his confidence.

"It was crazy," Gilliland said. "It probably opened a bunch of peoples' eyes. It was

an off weekend for my dad (who drives for Front Row Motorsports), so a lot of people were watching it. It added something big to my résumé to help me stand out."

David Gilliland, 39, said his son has always wanted to race.

"Racing was definitely in his blood," said the elder Gilliland. "When he said he wanted to race, he was young. I was excited because I race, and it's something we could do together. As much as I've enjoyed the success he's had, I enjoy the time we get to spend together and things I've been able to teach him and watch him learn."

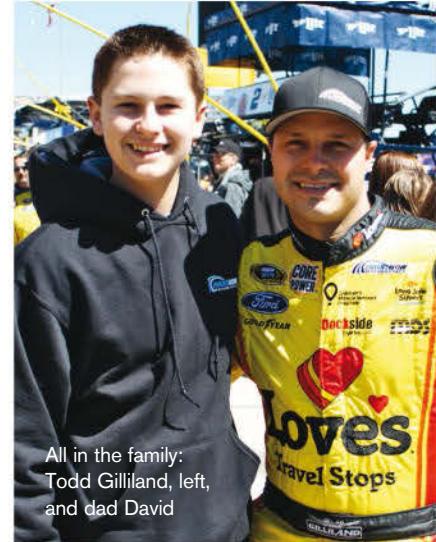
Gilliland has been racing since he was 5. He says there can't be any fear when he's behind the wheel.

"You know, when you get inside a car, there's always that risk, but you know your safety stuff is the best it can be," said the quick-rising prospect.

Gilliland hopes to make another ARCA start and maybe even race in the NASCAR K&N Series this year.

His parents know there are inherent risks but are totally behind him.

"I feel really good about the safety of our sport," David Gilliland said. "Anything can happen, and we feel like we do the best



All in the family:
Todd Gilliland, left,
and dad David

we know how on the safety side. (Still), you're worried about that. ... He can possibly get hurt or struggle."

Added Gilliland's mom, Michelle: "I know this sounds funny coming from a mom, but it's never been about the fear factor or danger of it. I think I didn't want him to do it because it's expensive and it's time consuming and it's a tough sport."

Editor's Note: Andy Marquis, 27, is a motorsports writer from St. Charles, Md. He began covering auto racing in 2008 while attending the College of Southern Maryland. He is managing editor of RACE22.com, focusing on short-track racing.



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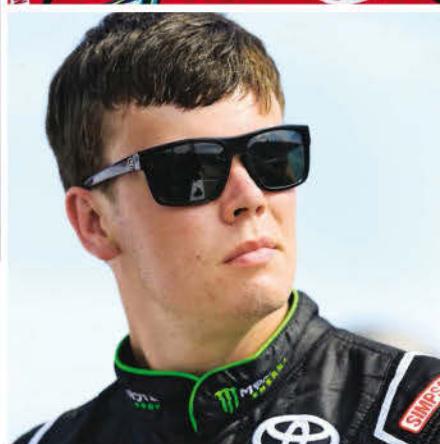
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ALL IN THE FAMILY

TOYOTA ON A MISSION TO KEEP NASCAR FUTURE STARS ERIK JONES AND CHRISTOPHER BELL IN THE RACING FOLD

BY MATT WEAVER

□ OVER THE PAST several years, Toyota Racing Development has collected some of the most impressive prospects in the recent history of NASCAR. Most notably in that group are Erik Jones and Christopher Bell—highly regarded youngsters destined for the Sprint Cup Series.

Before Jones and Bell, Toyota also had some kid named Kyle Larson in its stable.

Losing Larson became the impetus for the manufacturer to strengthen its development pipeline and keep top prospects barreling toward Toyota's two Cup teams—Joe Gibbs Racing and Michael Waltrip Racing.

In February 2012, Chip Ganassi Racing and Chevrolet lured Larson away from Toyota, which had partially

funded his development as a USAC standout with Keith Kunz Motorsports. At the time, Toyota had an informal relationship with Larson and no official contract. Ganassi beat out several NASCAR team owners for Larson's services, including Rick Hendrick.

Ganassi was simply able to provide Larson the quickest path to the Sprint Cup Series, and that served as a wake-up call to TRD president and general manager David Wilson.

Wilson had shopped Larson to MWR and JGR, but both teams simply got beat by Ganassi and spotter/scout Jeff Dickerson, who ultimately sold Ganassi on the idea of signing the successful open-wheeler.

After losing Larson, Wilson resolved to never allow another top prospect like Larson slip through his fingers the same way.

"That was definitely a wake-up call," Wilson said. "We had to step back a little bit. Manufacturers have always struggled with real development programs since we don't run teams. I can't say that we have a formal program at TRD, but what Kyle ended up doing was definitely a disappointment to us. ... Since then, we've been more proactive."

Enter Jones and Bell.

Jones, 19, first rose to prominence in December 2012 when he defeated Kyle Busch head to head in the Snowball Derby in Pensacola, Fla.—the nation's most prestigious asphalt Super Late Model event. Wilson says Busch became a Jones fan from that moment forward, lobbying TRD to support the young driver for the NASCAR Truck Series and beyond.

Jones again had people taking notice when he won the

NASCAR Truck Series race at Phoenix in 2013 when he was just 17 years, 5 months old—the youngest driver up until then to win a race in that series.

"I remember having a meeting at Homestead, right after Erik had won Phoenix (in Trucks), with (TRD executive) Allen Miller and Joe Gibbs, trying to sell Erik to Coach (Gibbs)," Wilson said. "He wanted to see how (Jones) responded to a full schedule in Trucks. I don't think we've ever seen a driver with so little experience do so well, so fast."

Wilson might have lost out on Larson three years ago, but Toyota might have found an even better version of the same driver in Bell. The 20-year-old Bell actually replaced Larson at Keith Kunz Motorsports when that seat opened up in 2013.

While TRD doesn't have an official development program, Kunz has Toyota ties



LAT PHOTOGRAPHIC (4)

and receives mechanical support from the manufacturer. After developing both Larson and Bell, Wilson plans to keep an eye on their program more than ever before.

Bell has split his time this season with both Kunz and Kyle Busch Motorsports, where he is piling up victories in every type of machine he pilots. Bell has also followed in Jones' footsteps by transitioning from Super Late Models to NASCAR—making his Truck Series debut in June at Iowa Speedway with the Gibbs satellite team. He finished fifth at Iowa and showed the same ability that earned him the comparisons to Larson back in 2012.

Pete Willoughby, co-owner of Kunz Motorsports, never thought there would never be another Kyle Larson.

"I almost feel stupid saying this because I've never seen anyone like Larson," Willoughby said. "We haven't seen the real Larson in NASCAR yet. But with that said, I think Chris is just as good—and maybe even better than Larson."

That's exactly what Wilson

Christopher Bell (opposite far left and wearing hat) ended up with an impressive fifth-place finish in his Trucks debut. Erik Jones (opposite wearing sunglasses and above) joins Bell as one of TRD's most-prized younger drivers. Bell is 20, Jones only 19.

and Toyota are banking on over the next several years.

While the manufacturer appears set with 30-year-old Busch as their cornerstone NASCAR Sprint Cup Series driver at JGR, the rest of the TRD lineup is aging. Matt Kenseth is 43, Clint Bowyer 36, Denny Hamlin 34 and Carl Edwards 35.

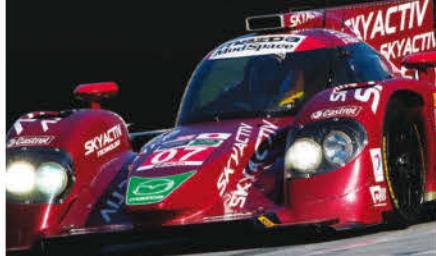
Jones and Bell appear to be next in line.

"We have an involvement with our partners at Gibbs and Waltrip," Wilson said. "We don't profess to have the experience to dictate a timeline to the Sprint Cup Series, but we do utilize our collective resources to prepare them."

"I feel like we're doing a much better job there than we ever have before." ☀

Editor's Note: Matt Weaver, 27, is a former racer who began covering the sport while in college at the University of South Alabama. He has covered all levels of racing for several Web outlets and is a frequent contributor to Sirius XM Satellite Radio and NBC Sports Radio Network.

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ROSSI'S LAST STAND

AMERICAN DRIVER HOPEFUL, READY AND WAITING FOR CALL TO FORMULA ONE

BY JOEY BARNES

ALEXANDER ROSSI CAN HELP make Formula One relevant in America, but a former IndyCar champion says the 23-year-old driver might be looking down the wrong path.

Rossi, a GP2 driver from California, is on the short list for one of the two Haas F1 Team rides for 2016. Also believed to be on that list are F1 veterans Esteban Gutiérrez, Nico Hülkenberg and Sergio Pérez.

Even NASCAR and IndyCar veteran Danica Patrick's name may be in the discussion for American team owner Gene Haas, who hopes to make his 2016 driver announcement late this summer.

Past IndyCar champion and current team owner Bobby Rahal, however, says Rossi might be better off focusing his attention on American open-wheel racing. Having been the head of Jaguar's F1 program in 2000, Rahal has been critical of F1 and sees more potential for Rossi to race in America.

"At some point, I think he needs to turn his eyes this way [toward IndyCar] if he wants to make a career, because the record is not positive for Americans succeeding, competing in Formula One," said the 1986





Alexander Rossi takes to the track in the 2015 GP2 Series Round 3 at Monte Carlo, Monaco, in May.

LAT PHOTOGRAPHIC (2)

Indy 500 champion. "Formula One is about how much money do you have, not how good are you. In this country, he'll have far more value winning the Indianapolis 500 than he'll have winning the Formula One championship."

Rahal went the route of Formula Three before a brief two-race stint in F1 in 1978 prior to returning to race in America. He went on to win CART titles in 1986, '87 and '92.

"Unless you're with one of the top teams, you're never going to be able to show what you can do," Rahal said.

The difficulties of an American racing in Europe are not lost on Rossi.

"I think it goes to show that America and Americans have been a little bit jaded by Formula One and some of the stuff that's gone on," Rossi told Autoweek. "'It is a very difficult environment. I think that it can be discouraging for a lot of people, but at the end of the day, it is the pinnacle of motorsport. It is the ultimate goal for everyone.'

"It's something that everyone tries being a part of and achieving at one point. I think that it's easy to get frustrated and to get down about the things that can happen, but it is important to keep pushing through the obstacles."

"What I've been trying to do is persist over there (in Europe) through the good times and the bad times and just kind of try and make the goal a possibility, and I think we are going to be very close. Europeans just want the results. If you can prove to them that you are capable of getting the results, whether you're American or whatever, I think the possibility of getting to F1 is greatly increased."

Rossi, a former F1 test driver for Marussia and Caterham, nearly made his F1 debut last season with Marussia as a replacement for the injured Jules Bianchi at the Russian Grand Prix. However, the team decided out of respect for its injured driver to only run one car.

It was another chapter in a frustrating journey to the F1 grid. Going into 2015 and without an F1 ride, he even considered a move to the Verizon IndyCar Series with Dale Coyne Racing. However, Racing Engineering, one of the premier teams in the European GP2 Series, came calling, and Rossi answered.

The only American to win in GP2 (Abu Dhabi in 2013), Rossi is second in this year's standings, following a runner-up finish at Silverstone. He trails McLaren test driver Stoffel Vandoorne. That's fine, but his sights are set on F1.

"It's obviously something you think about, being an American and (it being) an American team," Rossi said. "There are a lot of things for me that would be a dream scenario, but at the end of the day they're attaching me with the program because they believe that I could do a good job for the team and that I would be a good fit. I think that they're also very aware of the fact that they want to make an impact in F1 right from the word go, and that's something that I respect and they just need to be sure that I'm someone that can offer that up for them."

"It's all about proving myself in 2015 to get what I think I deserve in 2016 and have the opportunity to drive in F1, which is something that I believe I'm ready for, that I've been ready for, for the past two years." ☀

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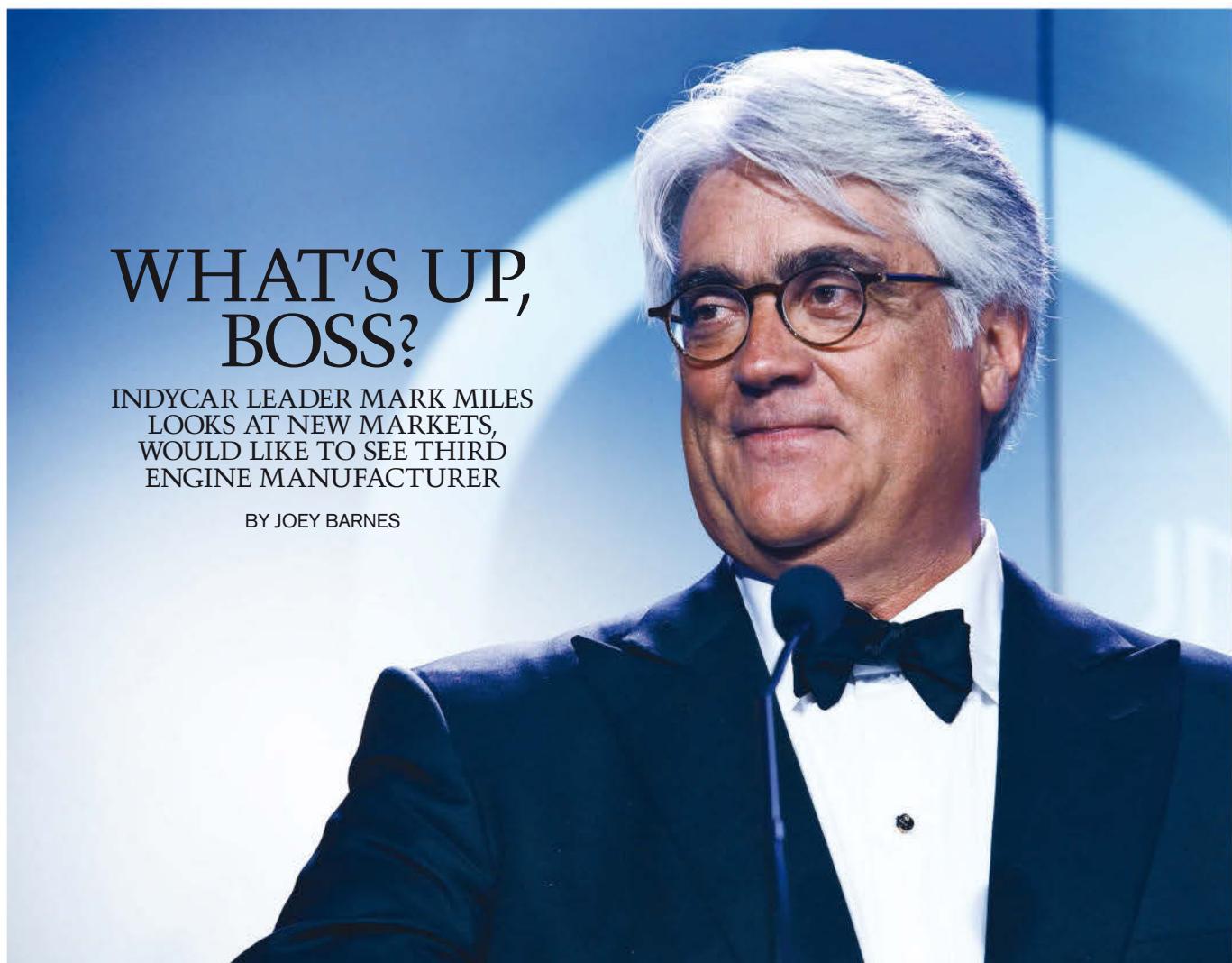
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WHAT'S UP, BOSS?

INDYCAR LEADER MARK MILES
LOOKS AT NEW MARKETS,
WOULD LIKE TO SEE THIRD
ENGINE MANUFACTURER

BY JOEY BARNES



CHRIS JONES/INDYCAR MEDIA

Mark Miles, CEO of Hulman & Co. (parent of the Verizon IndyCar Series), talked with Autoweek correspondent Joey Barnes on IndyCar's vision and what is on the agenda for its future. In his third year as IndyCar boss, Miles continues to find ways to build up America's premier open-wheel series.

Autoweek: With four Colombians in the IndyCar Series—Juan Pablo Montoya, Carlos Munoz, Sebastian Saavedra, Gabby Chaves—is there any consideration to host a race in that country, possibly at the Autodromo de Tocancipa in Bogotá, Colombia?

Mark Miles: There's been some discussion about the possibilities in Colombia, but at this point, we have not yet found what we think is a viable combination of people and

resources to pull it off. We're not looking to put races in places that have a supply life of a year or two or three. So while the traction and the peak interest of four drivers from the country is a really big deal, and we're excited about it, part of the evaluation is, would a race likely outlast the point in time when you have so many drivers doing so well? I wouldn't say it's off the radar screen, but it's not front burner at the moment.

AW: IndyCar has Chevy and Honda as suppliers—is there a desire for a third supplier such as Toyota or Ford to come to IndyCar? Maybe the possibility of Mazda, given the presence in the Mazda Road to Indy series?

MM: Absolutely, we would love to have an additional OEM join the series. Honda and Chevy feel the same way. More competition, hearing the resource requirements to drive the paddock, I think it will all be good stuff. We've been working on it for a while; there is some interest. I won't comment on which ones—but I will say the leading possibilities are both overseas-based companies. Really don't want to start a guessing game about which ones they are. I would say that it is highly unlikely we will see a third engine manufacturer participate with Honda and Chevy before the '17 season.

AW: It is very interesting you mention 2017, as Renault's contract is up in F1 at the end of 2016.

MM: (Laughs) Like I said, I'm not playing the guessing game.

AW: What are some things that you would like to see added into the current product?

MM: I would like to see a third OEM. I think that would be great for the competition. We are delighted with our teams, but we do have a concentration, like NASCAR, a number of cars in the teams of a couple of owners. Another team owner or two would be good for us, and I'd like for us to establish ourselves successfully in the Northeast. And I'd like to add a limited number of international events in February. That would leave us with a championship that would go from right after the Super Bowl through Labor Day. That's seven full months. If you could do something like 18, 19, 20 events in seven months, where all but the first month was in North America—I think it'd be really strong.

AW: With the race in Boston being Labor Day weekend and potentially being the season finale, do you feel there could be a loss of momentum by ending the season on a street course?

MM: We have a lot of fans who are about ovals, but we have a lot of fans that prefer road and street courses. The short answer to your question is no, I don't think being on an oval is part of the criteria for the finale of the championship. What's most important is we have a great event.

AW: Michigan was a very prestigious race in American open-wheel racing. Is there any interest from IndyCar to go back there—or to Phoenix for that matter?

MM: Michigan isn't on our list. Phoenix would be. There are only so many weeks in the summer when you can race. (Michigan has) their NASCAR events. You know, we've got Indianapolis, we've got Detroit, we've got Milwaukee, we've got Mid-Ohio—we're pretty covered up in the Midwest. So, that is not a priority. If we could find the right date and the right circumstances to be in Phoenix, we would be very interested in that.

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AW: Road to Indy ends its season at Laguna Seca, a very historical track and fan favorite. Is there a future for IndyCar there, and if so, where does Sonoma fit into its future plans?

MM: Well, that is the question. We would like to be at Laguna Seca, but we would have to find a way to do that in a way that's comfortable from the perspective of a race at Sonoma. Sonoma is in our future plans. The question is, can something at Laguna Seca and Sonoma coexist?

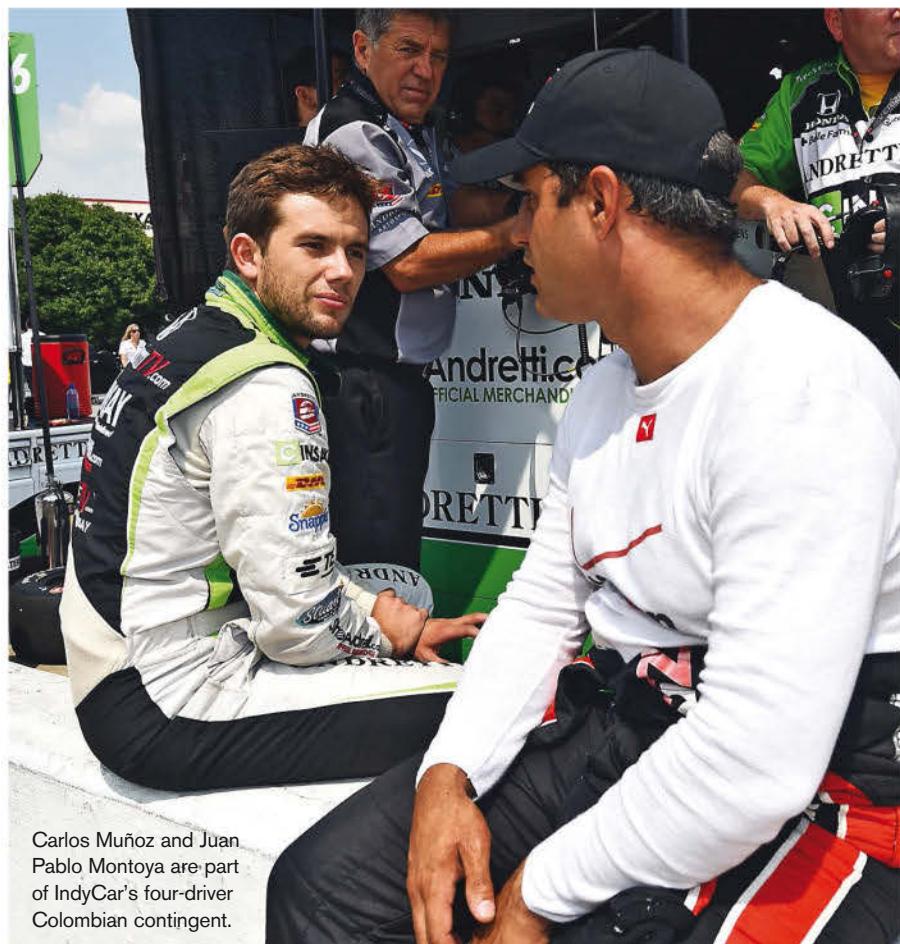
AW: Formula One has a very expensive sanctioning fee and has decided to not go to Hockenheim and might possibly remove Monza from its future. Is there a contract clause that prevents IndyCar from going to current or former F1 tracks?

MM: I think there are opportunities internationally, but we think IndyCar is fundamentally a North American-based [series]. So, what we're talking about for international growth would be championship races at the very beginning of the year and starting the year earlier when we really don't have a lot of choices as to where we can race as early as February in the States. So, we've got a window there of maybe six weeks, just after the Super Bowl into March. We do think there are international opportunities, and I think it is a matter of when more than whether we will be racing a couple races, maybe three, in that window.

AW: How about Japan, possibly Australia or England as an IndyCar destination?

MM: The England opportunity is limited by calendar considerations. Australia obviously wouldn't be. We could bring great racing down there, and it can be in February. Really, you just think about the parts of the world in February or early March that have the right temperatures, those are the places we are looking. We've had discussions in the Middle East. We've had ongoing discussions in South Africa. Maybe another South American possibility. Maybe Australia. But those are the climates that can accommodate something in February. We've got a lot of irons in the fire to see if we can come up with one, two or three terrific opportunities in that early part of the championship.

AW: Are there any contract clauses for IndyCar as far as F1 preventing the scheduling of an IndyCar race at a place like Circuit of the Americas or Suzuka?



Carlos Muñoz and Juan Pablo Montoya are part of IndyCar's four-driver Colombian contingent.

MM: We don't have any restrictive agreements like that. I don't know about each of the Formula One promoters and what arrangements they may have with Formula One.

AW: The racing adage is "go where they ain't," and NASCAR doesn't have a presence in the Northwest. What is IndyCar doing to win that region, and might we see another street circuit in Vancouver—a big market in its own right—or possibly Calgary?

MM: Yes. We are interested in the Northwest, and there are conversations ongoing. Especially if you give me the U.S. and Canada, I won't comment on which cities, but I believe you can find stuff that has been written in Canada about Calgary.

AW: As it relates to cost-cutting and tracks closer to home (Indianapolis), what about the possibility of doing one-day shows?

MM: I've seen fans and heard some promoters talk about that. You know, we're open to that. We have not yet found any specific promoters who felt they can make a one-day thing work.

AW: To help attract a younger demographic to the series, what is IndyCar doing to help promote younger drivers? And how important are the lower-tier series in that endeavor?

MM: I'd say in the two years I've been involved, it's more clear every day that Indy Lights and the ladder series are really important to us, particularly at identifying and developing young talent. Guys have shown that if they do well at (Indy) Lights, they deserve a look for IndyCar. I think its importance is established. We're trying to provide more resources to ensure (that) at least the winner of (Indy) Lights has adequate backing to have, if not the absolute certainty a high likelihood, that they'll get a ride at the IndyCar level. That's a question on being able to write a big enough check, but it's certainly desirable. ☀

Editor's Note: Joey Barnes, 30, is a native of Fort Worth, Texas, and has covered F1, IndyCar, the World Endurance Championship and NASCAR since 2012. He has contributed to multiple racing websites and is editor-in-chief of the racing website tributeracing.com

RACING ON TV

FRIDAY, JULY 24

- NASCAR Xfinity practice, Indianapolis; noon, NBCSN (L)
- NASCAR Sprint Cup practice, Indianapolis; 1 p.m., NBCSN (L)
- NASCAR Xfinity final practice, Indianapolis; 2:30 p.m., NBCSN (L)
- Formula One practice, Hungary; 7 p.m., NBCSN (S)

SATURDAY, JULY 25

- Formula One qualifying, Hungary; 8 a.m., CNBC (L)
- NASCAR Xfinity qualifying, Indianapolis; 11:30 a.m., NBCSN (L)
- NASCAR Sprint Cup qualifying, Indianapolis; 1 p.m., NBCSN (L)
- Red Bull Global Rallycross, Detroit; 2 p.m., NBC (L)
- Formula One qualifying, Hungary; 3 p.m., NBCSN (S)
- NASCAR Xfinity Series Lilly Diabetes 250, Indianapolis; 3 p.m., NBC (L)

- NHRA qualifying, Denver; 10 p.m., ESPN2 (S)

SUNDAY, JULY 26

- Formula One Hungarian Grand Prix, Hungary; 7:30 a.m., CNBC (L)
- NASCAR Sprint Cup race, Indianapolis; 3:30 p.m., NBCSN (L)
- Red Bull Global Rallycross, Detroit; 4:30 p.m., NBC (L)
- IMSA Tudor United SportsCar Challenge, Lime Rock, Lakeville, Conn.; 5 p.m. Fox Sports 1 (T)
- NHRA Mopar Mile-High Nationals, Denver; 9 p.m., ESPN2 (S)

MONDAY, JULY 27

- Formula One Hungarian Grand Prix, Hungary; 12:30 p.m., NBCSN (T)

FRIDAY, JULY 31

- NASCAR Sprint Cup practice, Long Pond, Pa.; 11 a.m.,

- NBCSN (L)

- NASCAR Sprint Cup qualifying, Long Pond, Pa.; 4:30 p.m., NBCSN (L)
- NASCAR Xfinity final practice, Newton, Iowa; 7 p.m., NBCSN (L)

SATURDAY, AUG. 1

- NASCAR Sprint Cup practice, Long Pond, Pa.; 9 a.m., NBCSN (L)
- NASCAR Camping World Truck qualifying, Long Pond, Pa.; 10 a.m. (L)
- NASCAR Sprint Cup final practice, Long Pond, Pa.; 11:30 a.m., NBCSN (L)
- NASCAR Camping World Truck Series Pocono Mountains, Long Pond, Pa.; 150, 1 p.m., Fox Sports 1 (L)
- Verizon IndyCar qualifying, Lexington, Ohio; 3 p.m., NBCSN (L)
- ARCA Racing Series ModSpace 125, Long Pond, Pa.; Fox Sports 2 (L)

- NASCAR Xfinity qualifying, Newton, Iowa; 4:30 p.m., NBCSN (L)
- NHRA qualifying, Sonoma, Calif.; 7 p.m., ESPN2 (S)
- NASCAR Xfinity US Cellular 250, Newton, Iowa; 8 p.m., NBCSN (L)

SUNDAY, AUG. 2

- NASCAR Sprint Cup qualifying, Long Pond, Pa.; 10:30 a.m., NBCSN (T)
- NASCAR Sprint Cup Pennsylvania 400, Long Pond, Pa.; 1:30 p.m., NBCSN (L)
- Verizon IndyCar Honda Indy 200, Lexington, Ohio; 1:30 p.m., CNBC (L)
- Verizon IndyCar Honda Indy 200, Lexington, Ohio; 6 p.m., NBCSN (S)
- NHRA Sonoma, Sonoma, Calif.; 8 p.m., ESPN2 (S)

L = live, S = same day,

T = tape delay

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■ DEREK HILL WON THE first race of the third round in the Maserati Trofeo World Series June 27 at Road America.

The son of legendary American racer Phil Hill was behind the wheel of an Autowek-sponsored car. He made the most of the pole position to build up a gap over his rivals. Nick Mancuso and Jeffrey Courtney fol-

lowed him across the finish line for second and third place, respectively.

The highest-ranking non-U.S. driver was Riccardo Ragazzi of Italy. He battled with Courtney in the early stages of the race and held off Guy Cosmo, who took fifth. Hill is not the series leader, but we are proud of his success in the Autowek-liveried vehicle.

—JUSTINE WOODARD

DÉJÀ VU

FANS INJURED, DRIVERS SHAKEN FOLLOWING NASCAR'S LATEST 'BIG ONE'

BY MATT WEAVER

□ FOR THE SECOND TIME IN TWO years, a car flew into the front-stretch catchfence at Daytona International Speedway during a NASCAR event.

In February 2013, Kyle Larson's car fliped upside-down into the fence during a violent last-lap melee of an Xfinity Series event. His car was sheared in half by the protective barrier, sending debris into the spectator area and putting 14 fans in a local hospital, while 14 others were treated at the speedway.

On July 6, following a rain delay that sent the race past midnight, a crash on the final lap of the Coke Zero 400 Sprint Cup race saw Denny Hamlin spin and connect with Austin Dillon, sending Dillon's No. 3 Richard Childress Racing Chevrolet into a barrel roll that ultimately connected with



LAT PHOTOGRAPHIC

the catchfence near the start-finish line.

The improved fencing—a result of Larson's crash—caught Dillon's car, but debris showered the stands. Fourteen fans were treated at the track, while eight others declined treatment. One fan was treated and released from a local hospital.

Talk about déjâ vu.

"We are running 200 mph and pushing each other around out there, and it's just

bound to happen," Dillon, who walked away, said. "No matter how safe we can make the sport, when you are going that amount of speed, things happen."

Dale Earnhardt Jr. won the race.

"I mean, you're just on the verge of tears, to be honest with you," Earnhardt said. "I saw everything in the mirror pretty clearly, and that car really went up in the air pretty high." ☀

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EBAY AD OF THE WEEK: 1959 RAMBLER HOT RAT ROD PATINA AIR RIDE BAGGED GASMONKEY FUGLY UNICORN CUSTOM



OK, sorry about the long title, but let's be honest, nobody finds a '59 Rambler on purpose so I need all the search words I can get. I figured the 'Unicorn' thing will bring in the most views. Interior: Yes. It has one, sorta. The robot fleece seat cover is my favorite part. I haven't hooked up the wipers or the heater yet, I just roll with Rain-X, and it seems to work fine.

WORLDWIDE WEB WATCH

- The traffic in Russia can be somewhat chaotic, and when traffic lights go out things usually turn from bad to worse. Then a hero citizen steps in: bitly/aw-traffic
- Have you ever witnessed someone park in a handicap spot when it seems obvious they shouldn't, but you ask yourself, "What can I do about it?" Well ...: bitly/aw-postit

SOCIETY NOTES: 'NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL A WRITE-OFF' EDITION

■ A woman in Australia gave her Maserati an unexpected makeover when she dodged a dog in the road. As she swerved to miss the canine, according to a story on the U.K.'s Mirror website, a pail of paint in the back seat (yeah, we also take our Maserati to, you know, Home Depot for supplies all the time) lost its lid and went airborne, with thick, white paint swirling around the cabin like a tornado and covering virtually every interior surface, including the luxury car's fine brown leather seats. Don't worry, even though the virtuous mishap (the pup was spared!) resulted



RAA/SPLASH NEWS

in roughly \$63,000 in damage, the whole car was written off by her insurance company for \$90,000, with the claims adjuster quipping, "Truth can be stranger than fiction with flying paint tins."

OVER THE LINES



MARION MIELE CHRISTIANSEN

PHOTO WITH CAPTION



JOE GROVE

"Boy, Batman's really fallen on hard times."

STICKER SHOCK



PETER BLACKFORD

Editor's Note: Autoweek interns/millennial badasses Joe Grove, 22, and Justine Woodard, 23, compiled BWTM for our 30-&-under issue.

Got a BWTM submission? Mail it to Autoweek, 1155 Gratiot Ave., Detroit, MI 48207, Attn: BWTM; or email us at bwtm@autowEEK.com

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2015 Audi A4 2.0 TFSI.....	258 torque
2015 BMW 528i.....	260 torque
2015 Porsche Cayman.....	213 torque

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GT-R® NISMO® EMBARRASS YOUR NEIGHBOR'S SPORTS CAR.

With the NISMO heritage of performance excellence under its hood, the GT-R NISMO is in a class of its own. It boasts a track-tested 3.8-liter VR38DETT V6 with 600 hp and 481 lb-ft of torque. Lapping the Nürburgring in 7:08:679*, the GT-R NISMO has a tendency to make other cars feel insignificant.

NISMO Performance | Racing Technology | Relentless Improvement

*Nissan 2015 GT-R NISMO with track options. Professional driver. Closed course. Obey all traffic laws, always drive safely and wear your seat belt. Damage resulting from racing, competitive driving, track and/or airstrip use not covered by warranty. See your New Vehicle Limited Warranty and Owner's Manual for proper vehicle operation and complete warranty details. Always wear your seat belt, and please don't drink and drive. ©2015 Nissan. Nissan and GT-R logo are Nissan trademarks.